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appeal either. Also a quarrel between husband and wife these wretched fools at once bring 177
in before the European magistrates, a crying shame; the deceitful Indian pleaders cheat 178
them of their money a good deal; they get one another into prison; their mutual hatred 691
remains with them smouldering like hot-pan fire; this is what they have gained by trans-
gressing the customary judgements of the ancestors. Let them take the great crimes to the courts; but what we have from olden times disposed of ourselves, why do they take heaps of such matter to the courts?

b. Concerning witnesses.

From ancient times up to near the present day we Santals did not know false state- 177
ments; we were stating what we had seen with our eyes, both about enemies and about 178
our brothers and sisters. After the Europeans have come, a few Santals have been judged 695
to be hanged, because they have spoken the truth. There were no witnesses of their crime; if they had lied and denied it, they would have been set free. In our councils we did not bring the witnesses in one by one; we put all the witnesses forward at once; still they did not tell falsehoods. Nowadays they have learnt deceit from the Dekos, and like them they sell their soul and honour for one brass-cup of beer; and as the magistrates do not know our language, they cannot distinguish falsehood from truth; they are only led astray by the words of the deceitful Indians; therefore we do not get just judgements. We would have any fear of the light swearing in the courts? Let them make them swear like the oaths of our ancestors, then they would tremble, fearing for their life, and they would surely not speak falsely. A few magistrates have let a very short oath in our language be made up by some Dekos; but we only laugh at this oath, because what is said aims at the one who administers the oath. They make them swear like this: "Speak the truth; if I speak what is false a tiger spirit will eat thee". The witness repeats this, following him: "Speak the truth; if I speak what is false, a tiger-spirit will eat thee". Why should witnesses have any fear from this?

c. The different kinds of crime.

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Among the great crimes are the following: To kidnap children, to sacrifice them, to kill 684
a person by carelessness, to rob one of his wife, to rape a woman, forcibly to apply sindur
to a woman. Our punishment for this was death. The kidnappers steal children, or catch 682
a person on the road, and sacrifice them. If they were caught at the moment, they killed them without any judging, and there was no appeal in this case. When some one inadvertantly shot and killed somebody during the hunt, the people passed judgement and let the person be killed in return. At such a time they let the man who shot and killed the other, stand where the man was who was shot and killed, and where the man who shot and killed was, there they let a relative of the shot and killed man stand. If he shoots